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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the ways in which entities external to schools, in this case for-profit educational management organizations (EMOs), can influence the development of school professional community. Drawing on case studies of six charter schools operated by three EMOs, this paper examines the presence of the five elements of professional community, supports and barriers to the development of professional community, and the role of EMOs in influencing those supports and barriers. The paper reports the findings that EMO staff can influence professional community in important ways: through the design of their program, including the structures that they set up for the use of time and staffing, and through their informal relationships with schools, including their roles as "cheerleaders," constructive critics, flexible keepers of the model, and reliable managers. Such findings can aid in understanding not only the role of EMOs but also the potential for other external organizations, such as the whole-school reform model providers and school districts, to promote positive moves in supporting the development of school professional community. They can also help EMOs develop their own educational approach. (Contains 39 references.) (Author)

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Educational Management Organizations and the Development of Professional Community in Charter Schools[1]

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Abstract This paper examines the ways in which entities external to schools, in this case for-profit educational management organizations (EMOs), can influence the development of school professional community. Drawing on case studies of six charter schools operated by three EMOs, we examine the presence of the five elements of professional community (Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1995), supports and barriers to the development of professional community, and the role of EMOs in influencing those supports and barriers. We found that EMO staff can influence professional community in important ways, through the design of their programs (including the structures that they set up for the use of time and staffing) and their informal relationships with schools (including their roles as "cheerleaders," constructive critics, flexible keepers of the model, and reliable managers). The findings of this study have important implications for the potential of other central entities, including school districts, to influence professional community.

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The Occasional Paper Series produced by the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education promotes dialogue about the many facets of privatization in education. The subject matter of the papers is diverse, including research reviews and original research on vouchers, charter schools, home schooling, and educational management organizations. The papers are grounded in a range of disciplinary and methodological approaches. The views presented in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the NCSPE.

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Professional community has become an important concept for the study of school improvement as research has shown the variety of ways in which it can help teachers and students alike (Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993; Louis & Kruse, 1995b), including positive impacts on student achievement (Lee & Loeb, 2000; Lee & Smith, 1993; Marks & Louis, 1997). In theory, charter schools can provide fertile ground for the development of professional community, especially "new start" schools where a professional culture is being created, not transformed (Wohlstetter & Griffin, 1998). However, the challenges faced by charter schools may also limit the development of professional community (Wohlstetter & Griffin, 1998). The increasing role of for-profit educational management organizations (EMOs) that manage charter schools adds a new wrinkle to the development of professional community, as these companies both provide new resources and expertise to schools, while also shifting some decision-making (including around issues of curriculum and pedagogy) away from the school site (Bulkley, 2002). In this paper, we seek a better understanding of the influences that external organizations – specifically EMOs that provide "comprehensive management" – can have on the development of professional community. As a first look at these relationships, this study is largely exploratory.

EMOs, including large companies such as Edison Schools, Mosaica Advantage, and Chancellor-Beacon, and a growing number of smaller companies, offer a range of services to schools, including administrative services, such as payroll, budgeting, and personnel management, and educational services/programs, such as curriculum, assessments, and teacher training. A school district or the board of a charter school can choose to contract with an EMO to provide specified services (i.e. payroll) or overall comprehensive management services. The most recent study of the growth of EMOs found 417 schools (320 of which were charter schools)

operated by for-profit management companies, serving almost 190,000 students in 24 states and the District of Columbia (additional schools are operated by non-profit EMOs, community organizations, and other groups) (Molnar, Wilson, & Allen, 2003) . Although the growth and potential impact of EMOs has been noted in the media and education magazines (Dykgraaf & Lewis, 1998; Furtwengler, 1998; Schnaiberg, 1999; Symonds, Palmer, Lindorff, & McCann, 2000), there has been little research on this new phenomenon (c.f. Fitz & Beers, 2002; Rhim, 1998; Scott, 2001).

The increasing involvement of EMOs is a critical part of the charter school landscape, and also has significant potential implications for public education more broadly and the role of government in funding versus providing education (Hill, Pierce, & Guthrie, 1997; Lyons, 1995). As recent events in major urban areas such as Philadelphia and New York City demonstrate, policy makers are growing more interested in private management of both charter and district-operated public schools. For charter schools, the shift in control to EMOs may impact the ability of schools to develop professional community. Thus, EMOs may reduce the autonomy that allows for the creation of strong internal decision-making. Conversely, EMOs may aid schools struggling for a sense of purpose by providing them with educational and organizational vision and expertise.

This paper describes the nature of professional community in six charter schools operated by three EMOs, and explores how the presence of an EMO, and the particular approach of each EMO, effected professional community in the six case study schools. The three EMOs selected vary in their approaches to financial control, hiring of staff, and educational program in the schools they operate. One EMO is a major national company that uses a clearly defined approach to education and governance; one is a national company that works with schools to develop an

educational approach; and the third is a small local company with a clear educational vision but considerable flexibility in how schools implement that vision. We found that EMOs have the potential to significantly impact professional community both through the programs and structures they create, and the informal relationships that provide the opportunity (not necessarily used) for company personnel to be both supporters and constructive critics of school efforts. Such findings can aid in understanding not only the role of EMOs, but also the potential for other external organizations, such as whole school reform model providers and school districts, to promote positive moves in supporting the development of school professional community. They can also help EMOs develop their own educational approach.

In the following sections, we examine the literature on professional community and possible relationships with EMOs, followed by a description of the study methods. In the first part of the analysis, we present case studies of three of the schools (one operated by each company). The focus in this part on a subset of the schools allows us to provide a richer and more complex description of each case, whereas the cross-case analysis that follows incorporates data from all six schools. The conclusion explores the implications of this study for our understanding of the relationship between external control and professional community.

Literature Review

The Concept and Impacts of Professional Community

The concept of professional community, comprising on-going teacher-to-teacher interactions around teaching practices and both student and teacher learning, has sparked a wide array of research on teachers' experiences and the effects of community on students. As Louis, Kruse and Bryk (1995) note, "The classroom is the dominant setting for teachers' daily life and the focus of their energies and concerns, but it is not the only context for their work" (p. 3).

Thus, researchers have sought to better understand the other contexts for teachers' work, including their relationship with their colleagues, broadly defined. Research on professional community has found that communal organization influences both teacher and student outcomes, including teacher morale and efficacy, student interest in academics and decisions to drop out of school (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993), and that professional community can influence student achievement (Lee & Loeb, 2000; Lee & Smith, 1993; Marks & Louis, 1997). Recently, additional research has refined and deepened the idea of professional community (c.f. Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Scribner, Hager, & Warne, 2002).

Some studies focus on the community within whole schools (c.f. Lee & Loeb, 2000; Louis et al., 1995; Louis et al., 1996; Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999), whereas others emphasize sub-groups within schools or opportunities for teachers to collaborate across organizational settings (c.f. Little & McLaughlin, 1993). This paper focuses on school professional community because it is at the school level that the reform of charter schools and the involvement of EMOs is expected to have influence.

Kruse, Louis, and Bryk (1995) identify five "elements of practice" central to school professional community that provide the foundation for the concept in this study: shared norms and values, a collective focus on student learning, collaboration, deprivatized practice, and reflective dialogue. Taken together, these elements help to counteract what they identify to be a significant challenge to educational improvement – teacher isolation - arguing that, "teacher isolation and lack of connection to the world outside the school becomes even more problematic when society demands improved performance" (Louis et al., 1995, p. 16). While treated as distinct elements, these five aspects of professional community are closely intertwined and often reinforce each other.

Shared Norms and Values

Kruse, Louis, and Bryk (1995) see shared norms and values, especially a shared technical knowledge base, as "the fundamental bedrock upon which all other aspects of professional community are built" (p. 28). In a similar vein, Wohlstetter and Griffin (1998) found that a clear and focused mission was a core "building block" for developing learning communities in charter schools (p. 5). Although a focused mission and shared norms and values are not the same, both emphasize the need for school communities to develop a coherent and shared sense of purpose.

Collective Focus on Student Learning

In reviewing the literature on professional community, we identified four critical components of a "collective focus on student learning:" a focus on student learning rather than teacher practice, and a collective focus on high expectations, academics, and on the school building as a whole. In contrast to schools where emphasis is put on teaching techniques and delivery strategies, Louis and colleagues describe a professional community as focusing on "how pedagogy is linked to the process of student learning", in ways that support student learning and achievement (Louis et al., 1995, p. 32). Newmann and colleagues note that this kind of support is marked by teachers' high expectations for students, a focus on challenging academics, the belief that all children can learn, and a commitment to student learning that is shared by most staff members (Newmann, 1996).

Collaboration

Louis, Kruse, and Bryk (1995) describe collaboration as an advanced form of collegiality, which is characterized by teachers discussing "the mutual development of skills related to the new accomplishments in practice" or by generating "knowledge, ideas, or programs that will help advance their expertise or contribute to school performance" (p. 33). Thus, collaboration

goes beyond mere cooperation to creating shared understandings among teachers that are often linked to a school's shared norms and values, thereby enhancing the community in which teachers work (Louis et al., 1995, p. 33). Collaboration involves work that is related to instruction, such as sharing useful techniques, materials and strategies, evaluating programs, and coordinating lesson content (Newmann, 1996, p. 315). In a professional community, this kind of collaboration is characteristic of the entire school, not just pairs of teachers (Louis et al., 1995).

Reflective Dialogue

According to Louis, Kruse, and Bryk (1995), "talk is the bridge between educational values and improved practice in schools" (p. 30). It is important for teachers to question basic assumptions they have about practice, and in doing so, they become "students of their craft" (Louis et al., 1995, p. 30). According to Newmann and colleagues (1996), these conversations should deal with and analyze specific teaching practices and behaviors. Furthermore, dialogue among teachers in a professional community expands to issues of school organization and issues of equity and justice because these topics may be instrumental in rethinking fundamental issues of teaching that are of concern to the entire community of teachers (Louis et al., 1995). It is also critical that these conversations be public, as they can then "both generate and reinforce core beliefs, norms, and values of the community" (Louis et al., 1995, p. 30).

Deprivatized Practice

Within a professional community, teachers are able to publicly practice their work and gain constructive feedback from colleagues. Beyond the process of formal evaluations, teachers observe each other to learn from and help one another (Newmann, 1996). By aiding and assisting peers in this way, teachers can have rich conversations about practice, because those discussions can be "specific" and "event-focused," helping teachers to think about their teaching

in ways they cannot while in the act of teaching (Louis et al., 1995). This can build trust and respect among the teaching staff. Indeed, teachers learn from each other's successes and disappointments in a "low-risk environment," which has a positive impact on the school as a whole (Louis et al., 1995, p. 32).

Supports and Barriers to the Creation of Professional Community

Professional community can be either fostered or inhibited by a number of interrelated aspects of the school and broader environment. In general, Scribner and colleagues argue that, "A cultural climate that promotes professional inquiry, risk taking among teachers, and rethinking leadership provides a fertile environment for professional community" (Scribner et al., 1999, p. 136). Similarly, Bryk and colleagues found that, "when internal professional structures and faculty norms are in place, a climate often develops in which faculty are encouraged to seek out and perhaps even try new ways of teaching" (Bryk et al., 1999, p. 771).

Structural Conditions

Decision-making. Marks and Louis [, 1997 #265]found that teacher empowerment in particular areas, defined as the ability of teachers to participate in and influence schoolwide decisions, appears related to the presence of professional community. Louis and colleagues suggest that empowerment must be accompanied by a commitment to changing teaching practice. Similarly, Wohlstetter and Griffin (1998) found that charter schools varied in their ability to effectively use their newfound autonomy and needed "organizational capacity to support teaching and learning" [#116p. 23].

Chubb and Moe [, 1990 #84] argue that school autonomy, or the "independence and self-determination of a community in its external and internal relations," (Wohlstetter, Wenning, & Briggs, 1995, p. 338), is the most important aspect of school organization [see also\Nathan, 1996

#41;Kolderie, 1990 #94]. Although research on professional community has focused more on the impact of teacher empowerment, work by Chubb and Moe, among others, suggests that school-level control over decisions may also be influential.

Internal Structures. Professional community requires opportunities for teachers to meet together and work together, both formally and informally. This can be supported by the availability of time for meeting (especially when linked with learning opportunities), the physical proximity of teachers classrooms and meeting spaces, communication structures, and the structure for planning (Kruse et al., 1995) (see also Scribner et al., 1999).

Social and Human Resources

Leadership. Kruse, Louis, and Bryk (1995) point to the importance of leadership for professional community, arguing that, "Leadership...needs to focus efforts on the core issues of shared purpose, continuous improvement, and structural change.... Principals who focus on classroom practice demonstrate through their actions that pedagogy is important, which, in turn, supports the expectation that conversation around these issues is worthy" (p. 39). Other research has pointed to the value of principals' efforts to build trust, their support for professional community, and the need for principals to support individual teacher development, and collective learning (Scribner et al., 1999; Scribner et al., 2002).

Access to Expertise. Access to expertise can come in a variety of manners, including formal professional development workshops, in-class visits by experts, and the sharing of new information and ideas among teachers (Kruse et al., 1995). An important aspect of expertise is that it serves the needs both of the school as a whole and of individual teachers within it (Louis & Kruse, 1995a; Scribner et al., 2002). For example, where professional community is concerned, it is important that it help teachers learn new skills related to curriculum and

instruction [Hawley, 1999 #231] However, expertise and other opportunities for professional growth have been available inconsistently in charter schools (Nelson & Miron, In press), and Wohlstetter and Griffin (1998) comment that, at some charter schools, professional development time "appeared to be used more for planning and school culture-building" [#116p. 14].

Socialization. In most communities, there are either formal or informal mechanisms whereby new members learn organizational norms. According to Louis and colleagues (1995), because schools frequently do not have formal methods of socialization and because administrators often pay little attention to mentoring new teachers, they usually "learn the ropes" from veteran teachers, and the presence of a strong professional community can "ensure coherence and quality in teaching" [#328p. 40]. In addition to veteran teachers socializing new teachers into a school's climate and culture, professional development and staff training can also serve this function.

Trust, Respect, and Openness. In order for professional community to exist and be maintained, a school must exhibit a culture characterized by openness to improvement as well as trust and respect among the school staff. Furthermore, teachers in a professional community respect the expertise of their colleagues, and interpersonal relations marked by trust help "to induce a sense of loyalty, commitment, and effectiveness necessary for shared decision-making and the establishment of collegiality" (Louis et al., 1995, p. 38). Because teachers in this kind of environment trust that their colleagues will act within the realm of the faculty's shared vision, they trust the actions and opinions of their colleagues, even when they differ from their own (Louis et al., 1995). Recent research on the role of relational trust highlights the importance of this particular factor, linking trust not only to professional community, but also more directly to student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

EMOs and Building Community

The relationship between external organizations such as EMOs and the development of school professional community is not clear. This paper focuses on three areas of potential EMO influence (see Figure 1). The first is the educational model or approach used by the EMO itself, including its level of curricular and pedagogical specificity and any formal structures within the school that the approach entails. The second is the formal relationship between the EMO and the school around decision-making; in other words, how the different "parties" in the relationship (including school staff, the school's board, and company staff) influence core school decisions. Finally, consistent with Kruse and colleagues' emphasis on more "intangible" issues, we examine the informal relationships between the company and the school (i.e. issues of trust and respect). Although Bryk and Schneider's [, 2002 #355] work on trust focuses on the relationships within a school building, their analysis directs one to consider the role of trust in other school-related relationships.

Research Questions

This paper uses interviews with school stakeholders (including teachers, principals, and board members) and company staff, along with supplementary documents, to examine the interactions between these EMOs and the six schools they operate, and the influence of those interactions on professional community. Thus, we focus on three research questions:

- In what ways does professional community manifest itself in the six schools operated by these three EMOs?
- What are some of the major influences on professional community in these schools?
- How does the presence and role of the companies contribute to, or detract from, professional community in these schools?

Methods

School Sample

This comparative case study (Yin, 1994) examines six schools and three EMOs that provide comprehensive management services. An earlier study, involving interviews with representatives of 15 out of 21 companies identified as providing comprehensive services to charter and regular public schools, described the range of EMO approaches to decision-making about educational, staffing, and budgeting issues (Bulkley, In press). Lin and Hassel define comprehensive management companies as those that offer "'soup-to-nuts' educational programming and management for schools" [, 1999 #169]. The three companies selected for this study fall upon a continuum of EMO practices (Yin, 1994), from those that are highly involved in educational and administrative decisions, providing an entire educational program, to those that work with schools to develop a different model for each school (Bulkley, 2002). For purposes of access (which can be difficult in EMO-operated charter schools), company staff were asked to select schools to be included in the study. School principals recommended teachers and board members to be interviewed. Table 1 provides information on the basic characteristics of the six schools studied (we have not provided more specific information in areas such as racial/ethnic composition and socio-economic status of students' families for the purpose of maintaining anonymity of the schools). All six schools, identified by pseudonyms, are "new start" charter schools, and were not converted from preexisting public or private schools.

Data Collection

One or two researchers visited two schools operated by each company for a day. During these visits, interviews were conducted with school administrator(s), 2-4 teachers, members of

the school's governing board, and, when possible, one or more parents, for a total of 40 people in the six schools. In addition, eight staff members from the EMO central offices were interviewed. Interviews lasted between 20 and 90 minutes, and averaged approximately 40 minutes. All school-level interviews included questions about each school's professional community, autonomy, relationship with the EMO, and decision-making practices. Company staff interviews focused on the company's approach to educational and management issues, and its relationship with these specific schools.

Data Analysis

Interviews were taped and transcribed, and then coded using the Nud*Ist qualitative data software program, based on themes that emerged through the literature and in the process of conducting the study. The core codes were developed deductively based on Kruse, Louis, and Bryk's [, 1995 #333] descriptions of the elements of practice associated with professional community and the structural and social/human resources that can support or hinder the development of professional community . Additional codes examining the role of EMOs were developed inductively. Following Miles and Huberman [, 1994 #178], the coded data were then summarized and placed in data matrices based on the themes used in this paper.

Ratings of Teacher Responses

To better understand how teachers described professional community within their schools, each teacher's responses were rated based on the five elements of practice at the center of professional community (Louis et al., 1995). Responses were given a rating between one and three, with one reflecting that a specific teacher reported a near or complete absence of a particular element of practice, and three reflecting a report of a clear presence of that element. Each teacher's responses were rated by one researcher who visited the school and an external

rater familiar with the concept of professional community but otherwise uninvolved in this research study. Inter-rater reliability ranged from 0.44 to 1.0; only codes with reliabilities of more than 0.60 were used in the analysis. The consistency in ratings across teachers from the same school and across teachers working in schools operated by the same company increase the confidence in the overall findings and specific ratings. Appendix A provides more detail on the rating categories.

Company and School Case Studies

Company A and Monroe

Company A is a large company that manages schools in many states. The company created a highly specified model for school design that includes the educational program (with materials, curricula, assessments, and professional development) and the organizational structure within the school building and between schools and the community/parents. While offering the "total package," as one company staff person said, Company A stills envisions schools that are, on a day-to-day basis, managed and operated at the individual site. This expectation relies heavily on a "strong principal" model, according to one company staff person, in which building principals hold the ultimate responsibility for implementation of the company model. Thus, principals are given broad discretion in areas such as staffing and program supervision, and are able to manage their budgets within the requirements set by the company. Principals are then expected to operate schools that have improving student achievement, constant or growing student enrollments, and stay within budget expectations. Although the principal is clearly "in charge," Company A schools are still organized in a fashion that, according to company staff, is designed to support a professional environment for teachers.

Monroe is a medium-sized school in a suburban area of a large city, and serves students from a wide range of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Founded by a group of local parents, the school's board sought out a management company to manage the day-to-day operations of the new charter school. They were particularly interested in finding a company with a clear and well-developed educational program, and in hiring a strong principal with experience in implementing the company's program. The principal has a high level of commitment to company ideals; her phrase, "the design is non-negotiable," was repeated by administrators, teachers, and the board member interviewed. Administrators and teachers described their role as implementing and improving the school's model, and they talk of how this goal requires them to support, encourage, and challenge one another.

Overall, school staff offer a clear and consistent description of the school's mission and goals. According to one teacher, "the mission is to give all students a great education regardless of what their background is or what their abilities are… [a great education] means they're all learning, they're all making progress, their test scores are going up…[and] they are showing student achievement." Although test scores are not the only goal at the school, improving them is clearly one priority for the administration.

Each of the elements of professional community is found at Monroe, but in ways that are tightly linked to the company program, thus limiting the ability of teachers to learn independently of that focus. Of particular importance to the development of professional community are the company-mandated daily opportunities for small groups of teachers to meet, discuss, and participate in professional development that focuses almost completely on implementing and refining the company's educational model. One teacher commented that, "it's nice to have the [clusters] because it does, it takes a big school and breaks it down into smaller

communities and gives you people to depend on." The daily teacher meeting time allows multiple opportunities for teachers to discuss issues related to logistics and individual students, and go beyond these to discuss broader educational and pedagogical issues.

At Monroe, teachers consistently reported an open-door policy for formal and informal observation by their colleagues. The sense that the teachers were "in it together" in learning the company program and improving their practice over time combined with an environment structured to allow for teachers visiting one another's classrooms to create a sense of openness (including the availability of two, full-time, in-building substitutes). For example, one teacher, when asked where she goes if she wants to improve her practice, said that, "The first thing I would do is I observe others and have someone observe me and then they can tell me this is what your next steps could be."

Many decisions at Monroe – especially those involving the educational program – are made at the company level. In other areas, responsibilities have shifted somewhat as the school has developed, with more authority moving towards the school level. One of the interesting facets of Monroe is that, although the educational model is almost completely externally driven, teachers still described believing that they have input into school decisions. An important structural mechanism for this input is the school-wide team that includes teachers who run each of the small daily teacher groups; this team can have input in areas such as professional development and student policies, but not around the core academic program. Staff reported a strong emphasis on consensus-building; according to one teacher, "as someone who is on the [school-wide] team, I have to be able to support [team decisions] and say, 'this is what I support,' and not say, 'well, I didn't really vote for this....' I have to support it and say 'I am trusting those people and if it's a mistake, then I have to say, whoops, I supported it, it was a

mistake now what can we do.'" Although the school-wide team plays an important role, the principal clearly maintains final authority within the school building.

Professional development in a variety of forms is an integral part of life at Monroe, ranging from a summer program for all teachers new to the school, to in-school workshops and visits given by school or company staff, to the daily team meetings to opportunities to work with teachers from other company schools. Although professional development is based almost completely on the company's educational program, teachers can influence what areas of the program they receive professional development in, but have few chances for learning opportunities not linked to the company. The principal argued that, "We're all about [the company's program] and about doing the design so anything that doesn't support or enhance what we're doing just doesn't make sense to allocate resources [to]."

Socialization is given serious attention at Monroe, through professional development and peer influence. The team structure is also used to promote buy-in; one teacher commented that, "it's almost like a checks and balances system. If I am not completely buying into [the company's program], someone on my team is going to help me buy into it." As well, the principal sees hiring and retention of teachers as critical to socialization and culture building. She commented that, "you weed those people out that don't buy in. What you have left over is...an incredibly talented and dedicated staff that love the kids and want to be here."

The openness and trust described by Monroe teachers and administrators is supported both by the formal structures put into place by the company, and the day-to-day actions of the school's principal. She builds loyalty through practices such as collaborative/consensus-oriented decision-making, promoting from within the school, and a consistent focus on improvement. She also has high expectations that are clearly communicated to the staff; one teacher said that,

"she doesn't hold back. If you are not doing something right, she's going to tell you." The administrators and others assume that teachers will struggle in one way or another with implementing the company's program, and there is a sense of a "shared effort" towards improvement in implementation. Trust is also fueled by a clear organizational structure that gives teachers a variety of ways to express their concerns and confidence that their concerns will be heard.

The company is the provider of the educational design, and prescribes everything from specific materials taught to the organizational structure to the provision of professional development. At the same time, it is the principal at Monroe who has created a school environment that demands fidelity to the company model and limits teachers' ability to improve their skills beyond the scope of the model; the corporate office would be unable to directly emphasize the model in the same way.

Company B and Tyler

Company B is a regional EMO that operates a small number of schools within a large metropolitan area. The company remains relatively small, with fewer than 10 full-time staff at the central office. The company has developed an approach that emphasizes intensive company-school relationships early in a school's life, then a more minimal relationship after initial start-up has passed and stability has been gained, where schools choose from a "menu" of management services. After the initial start-up, the relationship between Company B and its schools is not so much that of a "manager" as that of a collaborator.

The educational model promoted by the company incorporates some broad design principles that focus on students as resources, teachers as "facilitators" of learning, and the community as an important part of the learning process. Furthermore, the company's model

calls for attention to individual student needs and shared decision-making within the school. Within this more macro "vision" for education, there is considerable latitude for schools to develop a specific program based on their own needs, and the company does not offer specific curriculum or assessments linked to the model. Instead, teachers at the schools develop their own curricula, which give teachers a sense of ownership over their work.

Tyler serves a predominantly economically disadvantaged and diverse population in an urban setting. It is designed as an "open school", with large classrooms separated by partitions. This set-up was intended to facilitate implementation of the school's educational mission, which calls for hands-on learning and situates students as decision-makers, having them take ownership of their learning. Teachers consistently defined the school's goal as working towards implementation of the company's model. The school leader noted that this model goes beyond academic matters, to include issues of personal growth and requires teachers to develop separate projects (with no set school curriculum) that suit individual students' needs. For example, one teacher said, "I think each teacher comes with their many strategies up their sleeves and pulls out what works with the students."

Because teachers design curricula that reflect the needs of each individual student, teachers' daily time is taken up largely with independently developing curricula/projects for each student, and they spend little time reflecting with colleagues on their daily practice, working together to develop curricula, or visiting each other's classrooms. Yet recently, three teachers at the school have been collaboratively developing a scope and sequence to be used as a way to address the overwhelming burden of such individualized instruction. Also, because the uncertainty that accompanies an undefined curriculum has overwhelmed many of the school's young teachers, the school's staff members were in the process of collectively choosing, in

cooperation with the company, a reading program and a math program at the time of the site visit.

Teachers' participation in selecting these programs – and deciding they were needed – is an example of another central element of the company's philosophy, that is, shared decision-making within the school. Although teachers must demonstrate a commitment to the company's educational model when they are hired, thereafter, as one teacher put it, teachers have "100%" involvement in developing their curricula to meet the model's educational goals. Teachers also sit on the school's board of directors and on various school-wide committees that vote on the budget, discipline policy, and hiring new teachers. Furthermore, staff is primarily responsible for choosing what kind of professional development they wish to receive.

Teachers at Tyler have easy access to expertise, both within their school and at outside workshops. One teacher said that teachers are "encouraged heavily" to participate in professional development, which is well-supported in each teacher's budget and includes both staff development at the school, which occurs once a week for two hours, and workshops throughout the year. Teachers and the school leader decide what will be offered. Although a representative from the company is present at the weekly staff development meeting, the role of the company in providing teachers access to professional development is primarily indirect. All new teachers are trained in the model before beginning to teach at the school.

The school leader embraces the company's model and in doing so contributes to the cohesive vision and commitment to student learning that teachers in the school hold. She said, "Now in my situation, when I found the model, it's my model, that's what I would have done." She acts as an educational leader, meeting with teachers monthly to discuss their teaching and to help them with problems they might be experiencing. The school leader is familiar with the

students and actively involved in their educational and social progress. Her desk is out in the open in a large room where the assistant director also has a desk, leaving her little privacy from other members of the staff. This enhances her leadership style, which one teacher labeled "democratic."

Despite opportunities to share in decision-making within their own classrooms and for the whole school, effective and democratic leadership, and easy access to professional development, several barriers prevent this school from exemplifying an ideal professional community. Neither the company's model nor the school itself provides much time for teachers to meet and talk with one another about what is going on in their classrooms, with the exception of a weekly staff meeting. The stress for teachers associated with developing their own curricula with minimal guidance has led to high teacher turnover. One teacher said that, "even though the school itself continues from year to year, there is staff turn over and student turn over and when that happens it seems like we're starting new all over again."

Staff at Tyler share a cohesive mission for the school and collectively focus heavily on student learning. Although it is not a daily occurrence, teachers at Tyler have been moving toward more collaboration through their efforts at formalizing more of the educational program. Yet, teachers did not report much in the way of reflective dialogue or deprivatized practice at this school. However, these omissions seem to reflect the sheer amount of time the company's model requires of teachers each day, rather than a disinterested faculty or model that discourages such interaction. Although the school does not have some of the key elements which Louis and colleagues (1995) prescribe as necessary for professional community, some of the structures and resources at the school contribute to a setting in which teachers believe they are treated as professionals and in which they share common goals with other teachers. For example, teachers

share a commitment to meeting the company's model, are heavily involved in decision-making, are overwhelmingly happy with their opportunities for professional development, and are able to speak with the school leader monthly about how things are going in their classrooms. Even though teachers do not seem to have the time to speak with each other frequently about their classroom practices, they are spending a lot of time developing their own curricula focused on individual students, which gives them a strong sense of ownership over what they are doing each day.

Company C and Grant Decide on Pseudonym

Company C is a medium-sized EMO operating in a small number of states and working with schools that have a variety of missions. Unlike Company A or Company B, Company C offers schools neither a broad educational vision nor a specific educational program. Instead, the company works with local schools to tailor a program to the charter school board's ideas about what is in the best interests of the community the school serves. However, not offering a specific vision does not mean that the company is uninvolved with the educational aspects of the schools it manages. For example, the company has emphasized to principals and school stakeholders that raising scores on their state's assessment system should be a school-wide priority. Thus, curriculum development and careful curriculum alignment with the state standards and tests has been central to the efforts of both schools studied over the last couple years. Because it does not dictate structures or (with a few exceptions) professional development for the schools it operates, it has little visible direct impact on professional community.

For the most part, schools operated by Company C act as independent entities. However, they do share some common experiences with other schools operated by Company C, such that one Garfield teacher commented that, "other [company] schools are working from the same

general plan." The similarities lie mostly around a push towards developing curriculum and assessments aligned with state standards and some specific areas of interest to the company that are only indirectly connected with a school's primary educational program.

Grant's mission focuses on providing an alternative educational environment for students in a low-income, predominantly minority community. As the school founder (and still the dominant force in the school) said, the students "may not be doctors or lawyers, but we want to produce children that can contribute back to this community." To the extent that values are shared among the school staff, they focus on a strong devotion and dedication to helping at-risk students, rather than a particular educational vision. Student learning, especially as reflected in state test scores, has become an increasing focus at Grant.

Although the school staff at Grant seem to have an overall positive attitude towards their work in the school, the elements of professional community are only partially present. For example, teachers acknowledge the presence of a school mission, but define it in relatively vague terms. Discussions and collaboration among faculty, according to teacher reports, generally focus on issues related to individual students or to some shared lesson planning within grades. Although some teachers do spend some time in other classrooms, it is primarily for non-instructional purposes (i.e. maintaining discipline).

Many aspects of professional community that were partially present seemed to be in response to demands emanating from the state's accountability system. For example, the recent writing of school curriculum through school-wide committees and the specifying of goals in response to state standards and assessments (and incentives and sanctions tied to those tests) created opportunities for more reflective dialogue, a stronger focus on student learning and academics, and more substantive collaboration. However, it did not seem that these elements

were integrated into the school culture, or would remain absent these external demands. For example, when asked about their roles neither the head teacher nor the principal mentioned issues of classroom practice as areas in need of improvement or growth.

Teachers at Grant do not receive the kind of organized, coherent professional development experiences common in the schools operated by Company A (and, to some extent, by Company B). The principal, based on his own assessment of teacher and school needs, brings in outside experts. As well, teachers have opportunities to attend local workshops offered by private and public providers. In specific areas of interest to the company, all schools working with the company have the opportunity to receive expert assistance and send teachers to workshops. However, these offerings are not chosen around a cohesive professional development plan or in relation to a specific set of school goals.

Teachers do not play a substantial role in decision-making at Grant. Although there is a lead teacher who is the self-described "go-between" between the principal and teachers, she has little decision-making authority within the school. According to both school and company sources, most major policy and educational decisions are made by Grant's board and administration (although the company plays a strong role in areas such as budgeting). In the words of the school founder and board chair, "it's not the great hand of [the company] telling us what to do." When Company C has stepped in at Grant, it has been for the purpose of addressing basic organizational functioning, rather than pushing the school from operational to high quality.

During its initial years, both the company and the school's authorizer worked closely with the school's board to get the school "on track." According to the founder, the company head, "helped us restructure our thinking but maintain some of the vision." Although the school founder and board president is clearly the driving force behind the school, the current principal is

the day-to-day manager. The school has had a couple of previous principals who, according to the board president, "clashed" with his vision, whereas the current principal (recruited by the founder) is more in keeping with his ideas. The principal's efforts around curriculum issues (there was essentially no school curriculum before his arrival) have been in conjunction with those of Company C, and its push towards curriculum development and alignment with state standards and assessments. Strong and hierarchical leadership at Grant may diminish the development of professional community; teachers tend to go directly to the principal, who makes the critical day-to-day decisions for the school, rather than working with one another.

Although the school has been operating for a number of years, there is a sense among the teachers that their primary goal is "surviving" the work, and that surviving is success. Little evidence suggests that teachers or the principal see the elements of professional community (with the exception of a collective focus on academics) as central to quality education. Socialization of new staff and "buy-in" to the school vision are not central concerns for the administration or the school board. In each of these areas, Company C plays a tangential or nonexistent role in school development.

Cross-Case Comparisons

In this section, we compare the six schools included in this study, with a focus on the three case study schools described above, to examine the existence of professional community in the schools, and the impact of structural factors, human and social resources, and the role of EMOs on school professional community.

The Presence of School Professional Community

The following discusses the presence of the "essential elements" of professional community discussed above and by Kruse and colleagues (Kruse et al., 1995). Table 2 presents

the ratings (see Appendix A) for the different elements of professional community for each school and averaged across schools for summary company ratings.

Shared Norms and Values

Although teachers and other staff members in all six schools studied discussed a sense of a shared "mission," these described missions – and the norms and values implicit in them – varied in substance, specificity, and academic focus across schools. For example, staff in both schools operated by Company A consistently described a specific mission with a clear academic core that tied directly to company goals. At Grant, however, a relatively vague mission emphasizing helping at-risk students had less of a defined academic foundation. As well, the schools operated by Company A and Company B offered similar descriptions of their missions, whereas the two Company C schools had distinct missions. Most clearly present at the two schools operated by Company A was a shared technical knowledge base, as highlighted by Louis and colleagues (Louis et al., 1995). Although the Company B teachers needed particular knowledge and skills based on the model used by the company, teachers had insufficient interaction for this to be truly "shared."

Collaboration

Working together on projects big and small is a necessity for teachers in "new-start" charter schools, especially because the need to create, adapt, or implement new educational programs is critical with the opening of a new school. However, whether this results in cooperation aimed at completing tasks or deeper and more substantive collaboration that is built into the culture of the school is less inevitable. At several of the schools we visited, teachers and others described a strong sense of "family" within the building. However, the most common kinds of interaction around educational issues at schools operated by Company C and Company

B were some joint lesson planning (often for the sake of efficiency) and curriculum development/selection. The latter, in particular, had the feel of a temporary effort to complete a job that was needed and could then be considered "over." Ironically, it was only in the schools that were *not* creating their own curriculum – those run by Company A – that we found evidence of serious and sustained collaboration around pedagogical and content issues. The close link between this more substantial effort and the daily opportunity teachers had to work together was hard to miss, and consistent with some of the challenges found in research on local development of educational change (Firestone & Corbett, 1988).

Collective Focus on Student Learning

As discussed in the literature review, we identified several components of a collective focus on student learning, including a focus on student learning rather than teacher practice, and a collective focus on high expectations, academics, and the school building as a whole. The focus on student learning was most evident in our discussions with teachers at schools operated by Company B, where the model itself puts a strong emphasis on individualized student programs. In other schools, the most obvious evidence of a focus on student learning was in the frequent discussion of test scores, especially at those schools operated by Company C.

High expectations for student success were voiced at all six schools, although in at least one case, the substance of the expectation did not seem to match the teacher's perception that her expectations were high. In this case, one teacher at Grant said that the goal was for the students (many of whom were working below grade level) to improve their skills by one grade level per year, which would keep them "behind" throughout their schooling.

A clear collective focus on academics was most evident at the two schools operated by Company A, where the company's program placed strong emphasis on academics. In the other

schools, a stress on academics was sometimes minimized in exchange for a stress on educating the "whole child." At the two Company C schools, in particular, concerns about test scores (based in part on pressure from the state accountability system) were the center of attention for the academic program. Finally, a clear collective focus on the school, rather than individual classrooms, was not easy to assess through these interviews, although increased time to work together seemed connected with teachers' feelings of shared effort and school-wide responsibility.

Reflective Dialogue and Deprivatized Practice

Both reflective dialogue and deprivatized practice were reported at fairly low levels in the schools operated by Company C and Company B, but at high levels in the schools operated by Company A. Dialogue in all six schools included discussions about individual students and logistics, but only in the Company A schools did teachers describe serious and sustained discussions about issues of practice and content. In terms of deprivatized practice, teachers in the Company C and Company B schools had few opportunities and little encouragement to spend time in other classrooms or to invite teachers into their rooms for the purpose of improving their practice. Only at the Company A schools were reflective dialogue and deprivatized practice seen as essential or even supportive aspects of school growth and improvement.

Barriers and Supports

Kruse and colleagues discuss a large number of potential influences on the development of school professional community (Kruse et al., 1995). In this section, we focus on some that seemed of particular importance in the six schools we studied.

Structural Issues

We found issues related to decision making, teachers' roles, and teachers time to meet and talk among the most important structural factors for supporting or hindering the development of professional community in these schools. Although there is considerable variation among how decisions are made in these six schools, and the role of teachers within the school structures, those schools operated by the same company tended to be fairly similar. In the schools operated by Company B, teachers played the most formally significant role, sitting on committees with decision-making authority and the schools' boards; teachers also had influence in the broadest range of areas. However, the teachers at the Company A school also reported a relatively high level of influence, and a belief that they had a "voice" in school-wide decisions through the formal structures of the school. Teachers at Monroe did not, though, have any influence on the educational program in the school. At the two schools operated by Company C, the role of teachers in school-wide decisions was not defined by the company, and varied between the schools – at Grant, the principal and chair of the school's board made most of the decisions, while at Garfield the principal's style lent itself more towards consensus-building. The role of the company in school decision making is discussed at greater length below.

One clear finding of this study is that teachers in the schools where time to meet and talk was ample viewed this as a central element to the schools' current and future development. The weekly or monthly meeting time for teachers in the Company C and Company B schools did not seem adequate for them to either delve more deeply into substantive and/or pedagogical issues (rather than focusing on logistics) or to develop the kind of culture that would support critique and reflection as part of the community.

Social and Human Resources

Leadership, access to professional development, and issues of socialization and "buy-in" were particularly important social and human resources for developing professional community in these schools. Leadership mattered regardless of whether the program was externally or internally driven, but how it mattered seemed to vary. In the externally driven program offered by Company A, the school leaders play a significant role as the lead front-line implementer. However, they were somewhat limited in the development of professional community by the structures and program imposed by the company. Conversely, leaders in less prescriptive environments played a critical role not just in developing "buy-in," but in creating (or not creating) the types of structures that could support professional community. Just as leaders at Company B and Company C have more ability to alter school organization and educational programs, leaders who did not see the importance of such community likely made it difficult to develop (i.e. by not providing opportunities for teachers to interact, collaborate, observe, and reflect).

Clearly, the most elaborate and structured professional development was found in the schools operated by Company A, where traditional workshops were combined with in-class visits and support by company experts and other teachers and the daily teacher meeting time. The combination of these elements seemed a significant contributor to professional community. In keeping with this collective effort, teachers had individual opportunities, largely through company programs, to develop their individual skills and knowledge. However, their skill development opportunities were limited to those the company viewed as consistent with the model.

In the Company B schools, some shared professional development around the school's model seemed to foster a strong sense of commitment and "buy-in" to the school's and company's mission. At the Company C schools, professional development linked with the company vision was relatively limited, but was not, for the most part, supplemented by professional development selected by the school that connected with the particular site's mission. The school-wide professional development at these schools was largely based on principal preference or an aggregation of teachers' interests and preferences, rather than a carefully thought-through plan for meeting school-wide goals.

Attention to the need to support "buy-in" through socializing teachers to a school's practices and beliefs was varied across the schools and companies. At both the Company B and Company A schools, teachers were provided with a formal introduction to the basic model on which these schools were built, although this process was far more elaborate for teachers in the Company A schools than in the Company B schools. For Company C, neither the company nor the school had formal mechanisms for socialization, although teachers at both schools discussed "bonding" early in the year with new teachers. Buy-in by teachers is also influenced by hiring and retention practices, and principals at schools operated by all three companies discussed the importance of staffing as a tool for creating a cohesive community and improving school quality.

One of the most noticeable differences between the schools operated by Company A and Company B, and those managed by Company C, was the difference in *how* and *if* school personnel thought improvement was needed, which Louis and colleagues found to be important (Louis & Kruse, 1995a). Based on these short site visits, the strongest recognition/belief that classroom practices needed to be improved was found in teachers at Company A's schools; the challenging nature of the program and the daily conversation about teaching among the faculty

likely contributed to this openness. At the Company B schools, the teachers and principals were both concerned with improving practice and with how well they were able to implement the model. However, these efforts seem largely teacher-based, rather than emerging from the school community with individual teachers taking primary responsibility for improvement.

The schools that had a more apparent practice-oriented professional community, the two schools operated by Company A, had a combination of high levels of trust and structured opportunities for interaction. In these schools, staff and the company believed in the ideas of professional community, including reflective dialogue and deprivatized practice, and created opportunities for these elements to exist. Although the Company A schools may not exhibit the full characteristics of a "mature" community, teachers discussed the centrality of reflection and improvement to the school's mission in a way that offered hope that schools would move towards such maturity (Kruse & Louis, 1995).

EMOs and Professional Community

The three companies in this study had definite, and different, impacts on professional community in the schools they operated. As Table 2 demonstrates, schools operated by the same company tended to have similar ratings on the different elements of professional community, with schools operated by Company A having the highest ratings (19.8 out of a possible 21), those by Company B having the second highest average (15.8), and those operated by Company C having the lowest average (13.8). The most apparent EMO influences on professional community came through the formal model it provided to schools and the informal relationship between schools and companies.

Educational Model

In terms of the relationship between the model and professional community, a strong vision with specific structures to support that vision, in this case provided by outside companies, appeared to contribute to moving aspects of professional community beyond enhanced interaction towards real reflection and growth. The clearly defined and detailed nature of Company A's program led, in the two schools studied, to a coherent and cohesive combination of professional development and socialization linked with a distinct educational model and the structures to foster teacher interaction. Combined with a belief – implicit in the structures of the model – in the need for reflective dialogue and deprivatized practice, and strong leaders (especially at Monroe) with commitment to the model, these different factors created high, if potentially limited, levels of professional community at both Company A schools.

Informal Relationship Between Company and School

The informal relationships between the company and the school can enhance professional development by motivating school personnel, helping them to recognize areas for improvement, and giving them confidence that they needn't worry about the "little details." However, such beneficial impacts are not automatic, but require company staff to have a positive, respectful attitude towards school staff that recognizes their professionalism, and to operate as efficiently run businesses.

Among the roles that company staff can play are the "cheerleader," constructive critic, flexible keeper of the model, and reliable manager. Although principals at all six schools reported feeling "supported" by their management company, teaching staff were more likely to report a similar sense of support at Company B and Company A, whereas teachers in Company C schools reported little sense of connection with the company. Even more important, especially

for the development of professional community, was *where* and *to whom* company staff offered both support and critique.

At the Company A schools, company staff spent time in individual classrooms, working with teachers on pedagogical issues as the teachers struggled with implementing the model. Their focus on the classroom (as well as the whole school) helped set a tone for a school culture that emphasized reflective practice and a belief in the importance of professional community. At Company B, company staff involvement in classrooms was more minimal, and at Company C it was almost nonexistent. Because the Company C approach does not rely on a particular educational model, it is unsurprising that the support and critique of its staff play a relatively nominal role in the development of professional community.

Company staff are also expected to be "keepers of the model," working to ensure that the company vision is implemented with some level of fidelity. However, company staff at all three companies recognized the importance of having some level of flexibility, as the company vision/model may require change as it is tested in the "real world." At Company C and Company B, company staff seemed most receptive to input from schools, whereas Company A staff were open to input about how to implement the model – which was appreciated by principals and other staff – but less interested in suggestions for altering the model. Such limited flexibility has the potential to undermine the development of professional community; however, at the two schools operated by Company A, there was no evidence that this had actually occurred. Finally, company staff have a responsibility to act as reliable managers, building trust among school personnel that the day-to-day administrative responsibilities of the company will be met. Such trust that managerial tasks will be taken care of can enable school faculty to focus on issues related to teaching and learning.

The Role of EMOs and External Models

External models (including those created by EMOs) have the potential to support the development of professional community, but also have the potential to diminish such development. The specifics of the model itself, especially the structures it creates and the level of challenge in the substance, as well as the people at the school and company level who are putting it into place, are critical to understanding the relationship between models and school professional community. Although the two schools operated by the most prescriptive EMO, Company A, exhibited high levels of professional community, other EMOs that also provide a highly defined model, but do not emphasize teacher interaction as a core element of model implementation, may not support or may even stifle the development of professional community.

Regardless of the internal school structures and resources provided by the EMO, the importance of context and individual personalities working in schools should be emphasized. Indeed, all the schools operated by Company A likely do not exhibit the same level of professional community as Monroe, because not all incorporate every aspect of the company's model and/or have as focused and committed a school leader.

Just as highly structured external models may not all promote professional community, a company such as Company C, with a "hands-off" attitude towards much of the educational program, could operate schools with a high level of professional community. In such a case, it would be the structures created by the people at the individual schools, along with their own beliefs, resources, etc., that would be the primary contributors to the development of professional community, not the company's efforts. What this study demonstrates is that external models *can* provide fertile ground for professional community, not that they always will. Conversely, schools developed from the bottom up may not promote professional community.

Conclusion

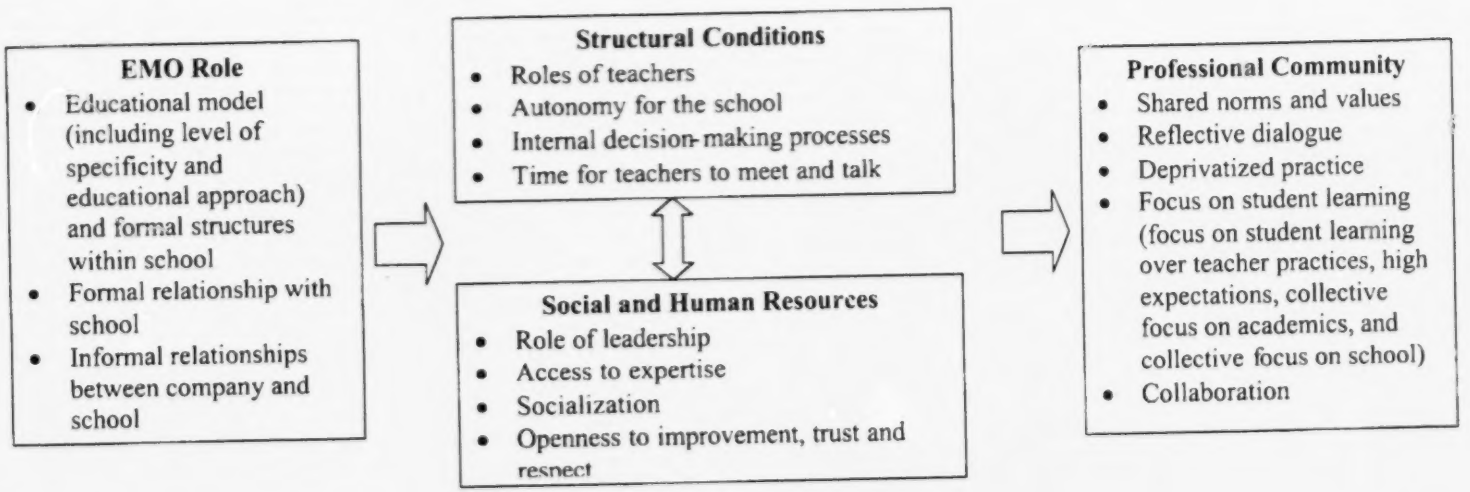
EMOs are a new participant in the provision of public education. Research that examines their practices is important, as it can illuminate if, in fact, they operate in ways significantly different than existing educational organizations. As this paper demonstrates, the practices of specific EMOs can have a significant effect on the development of school professional community. A clear limitation of this study is the small number of companies and schools included; other companies and other schools operated by the same company may well have different experiences with professional community. The variability in school demographics also makes specific inferences difficult. However, as an exploratory study looking at a previously unresearched domain, the small sample can illuminate these relationships and provide directions for future study. Thus, this research suggests that it is *possible* for external organizations to provide the kinds of supports and relationships that can aid in the development of professional community, despite the natural tension between school-based autonomy as a support for professional community and external control. While this may seem more likely in the case of external models that require local development (such as Company B's model or that of the Coalition of Essential Schools), in this specific case, a highly prescriptive company was able to promote professional community through very specific design elements.

Particular areas of importance for the development of professional community included the role of EMOs in: designing structures that facilitated substantive teacher interaction, through discussion and dialogue, joint endeavors for school improvement, or both; selecting strong leaders that shared the company's mission but were able to operate independently; and designing or supporting strong programs for collective and individual professional learning. Informal relationships between external organizations and schools are also important, including high

levels of trust and respect and a focus by external organizations on providing both support and critique that is classroom-focused and sets a "tone" for serious talk around curricular and pedagogical issues. At the same time, these organizations can ensure significant decision-making at the school level, which gives teachers a feeling of professionalism and ownership over their work.

Although the focus of this paper is on relationships within charter schools, and between charter schools and EMOs that operate them, the implications are much broader. With the continuing interest in decentralization and school-level autonomy, many organizations that work with schools – including whole school reform providers and school districts – must also struggle with how to support building-level autonomy while still aiding schools in developing a strong sense of mission and a powerful professional community.

Figure 1. The relationship between educational management organizations and school professional community[2]


EMO Role
• Educational model (including level of specificity and educational approach) and formal structures within school
• Formal relationship with school
• Informal relationships between company and school
Structural Conditions
• Roles of teachers
• Autonomy for the school
• Internal decision-making processes
• Time for teachers to meet and talk
Social and Human Resources
• Role of leadership
• Access to expertise
• Socialization
• Openness to improvement, trust and respect
Professional Community
• Shared norms and values
• Reflective dialogue
• Deprivatized practice
• Focus on student learning (focus on student learning over teacher practices, high expectations, collective focus on academics, and collective focus on school)
• Collaboration

[2] This model builds on that developed by Kruse, Louise and Bryk (1995).

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Table 1

School Characteristics

School	Company	Size	Grades Served	Location	Ethnic Minority Population	Free or Reduced Price Lunch
Monroe	Company A	500+	Elementary/ Middle	Suburban/ Urban Fringe	20-40%	20--40%
McKinley	Company A	500+	Elementary/ Middle	Urban	More than 80%	40-60%
Tyler	Company B	Under 200	Elementary	Urban	60-80%	60-80%
Taft	Company B	Under 200	High School	Urban	More than 80%	60-80%
Grant	Company C	200-500	Elementary/ Middle	Urban – small city	More than 80%	80-100%
Garfield	Company C	200-500	Elementary	Urban	60-80%	80-100%

Table 2

Ratings of Teacher Responses about Essential Elements of Professional Community by School and Company

Company	School	Clarity of Mission/ Purpose	Reflective Dialogue	Deprivatized Practice	Focus on Teacher Practices vs. Student Learning	High Expectations	Collective Focus on Academics	Collaboration	School and Company Totals
Company A		**2.8**	**2.8**	**3.0**	**2.2**	**3.0**	**3.0**	**3.0**	**19.8**
	Monroe	2.7	3.0	3.0	2.3	3.0	3.0	3.0	20.0
	McKinley	3.0	2.7	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	19.7
Company B		**2.8**	**1.8**	**1.5**	**3.0**	**2.8**	**2.0**	**2.0**	**15.8**
	Taft	2.5	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	16.5
	Tyler	3.0	1.7	1.0	3.0	2.5	2.0	2.0	15.2
Company C		**2.0**	**2.0**	**1.2**	**1.7**	**2.7**	**2.0**	**2.3**	**13.8**
	Garfield	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	13.5
	Grant	2.0	2.0	1.3	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.0	14.0
Inter-rater reliability		0.69	0.81	1.0	0.67	0.77	0.69	0.63	

Note: For some codes, we were unable to code every response. The following codes have missing responses (the number of missing responses is in parentheses): deprivatized practice (1), focus on teacher practices vs. student learning (1), high expectations (3).

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Appendix A – Professional Community Elements of Practice Rating System

Shared Sense of Purpose/Norms and Values - Clarity of Mission/Purpose/Goals

1 = Teacher does not describe particular values or purposes of the school when asked about the school's mission

2 = Teacher reports on values important to the school, but the values/mission/purpose are fuzzy or vague

3 = Teacher describes a clear mission/purpose/goals of the school

Reflective Dialogue

1 = Conversation is primarily casual, in passing (e.g., in the hallway), and centers on logistical or housekeeping issues; teachers do not talk about substantive curriculum or pedagogical issues

2 = Conversation between/among teachers centers on concerns over individual students' academic or behavioral problems; or if the brand of dialogue falls somewhere between 1 and 3, i.e., there is some discussion of teaching issues but not to the extent of 3

3 = Conversations between/among teachers hold practice, pedagogy and student learning under scrutiny; by engaging in reflection, teachers become students of their craft; public conversation focuses on topics such as: 1) academic content 2) intelligent use of generic teaching strategies 3) development of students 4) social conditions of schooling and issues of equity and justice

Deprivatized Practice

1 = Almost no teacher visitation takes place; maybe a formal observation a few times a year by an administrator or other outside person (i.e., company personnel), but for the purposes of formal evaluation; it is a high- risk environment (in contrast to c) which is low-risk characterized by trust and respect)

2 = Teachers sometimes visit each other's classrooms, but primarily for the purpose of monitoring or assessing; there may be some discussion of the observation for the purposes of evaluation, but not meaningful discussion / analysis of teaching; roles are narrowly defined and not reciprocal (i.e., the mentee would never advise the mentor)

3 = Teachers regularly visit each other's classrooms; modeling; it is a reciprocal type of observing – teachers can trade off roles of mentor, adviser and specialist; teachers work to refine their practice in public ways; mutual observations provide a rich context for discussion of teaching practice; deprivatization is accompanied by frequent feedback and performance; mutual trust and respect creates openness to further improvement in the school (it's a low-risk environment)

Collective Focus on Student Learning – Four Sub-Codes

Focus on Teacher Practices Vs. Student Learning

1 = Teacher's focus is on the mechanics of teaching, with little or no emphasis placed on the process of student learning; the learning environment is static and not responsive to or supportive of different students' needs

2 = Teacher pays some attention to student learning, but the focus seems to be primarily on what he or she is doing in the classroom and not on how students learn

3 = Teacher places sustained attention to students; teacher's emphasis is on how pedagogy is linked to the process of student learning, rather than on the mechanics of teaching

High Expectations

1 = Teacher may suggest that all students are not academically capable or teacher may express low expectations

2 = Teacher's beliefs and values reflect a mix in terms of the academic abilities of the students and the level of expectations appropriate for the students (high vs. low expectations)

3 = Teacher's beliefs and values support notions of children as academically capable, and provide learning environments responsive to and supportive of student achievement; teachers have high standards for their students

Collective Focus on Academics

1 = Teacher reports that school goals/purposes/mission focus primarily on non-academic issues (i.e. developing students as good citizens)

2 = Teacher reports that school goals/purposes/mission combine both academic and non-academic student goals

3 = Teacher reports that school goals/purposes/mission center on issues of student learning and academic development

Collective Focus on School

1 = Teacher is concerned with how his/her particular students fare, but does not mention broad concern for the school as a whole OR teacher views teaching as just a job and shows little concern for how even their own particular students fare

2 = Teacher expresses some degree of concern for the school as a whole, but seem primarily focused on his ore her individual students

3 = Teacher suggests that a focused school vision for student learning is shared by school staff; teacher reports feeling responsible for how students in the school fare and feels responsible for helping other teachers do their best; teachers are concerned with improving the school as a whole; teacher reports a strong sense of shared responsibility among the faculty who help each other reach high standards

Collaborative Activity

1 = Teachers work primarily in isolation; if teachers work together at all, it consists of little meaningful or substantive activity, centering on logistical or "housekeeping" issues

2 = Teachers' work together is characterized by cooperation (i.e., planning an activity); does not necessarily entail a shared value base about teaching practice, students and learning; the focus is on mutual aid to get work done more efficiently; may be "contrived collegiality" in which teachers go through the motions of working together, such as peer coaching (it is usually administratively proposed), but have little real connection with each other around their practice and receive little meaningful feedback from each other about teaching; may be pairs of teachers working together (in contrast to c), where collaboration is a generalized attribute of the whole school)

3 = True collaboration is a generalized attribute of the school (not just pairs of teachers); there is substance to the work teachers do together that is meaningful to curriculum or pedagogy; teacher meetings include things such as the following: curriculum development, lesson planning, guidance and counseling, evaluation of programs, or other collaborative work related to instruction; characterized by collegial relationships, which entail mutual learning and discussion of classroom practice and student performance; the essence is codevelopment; role and department boundaries are more permeable, though they may remain meaningful

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